

Flowers still going strong in November!

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How about this weather? I can't believe it's November and the annuals are still going strong, especially those that tolerate cooler weather like petunias.

By now, we would have pulled most of the annuals and tender vegetables but I have seen many plantings still looking good. This is really putting a hurt on my gardening schedule!

I like to have all of my perennials cut back and the garden cleaned up by now but I am having a really difficult time.

The weather has been so nice that I want to work outside but my plants are still looking so good that I hate to tear them out.

I sound like a typical gardener, never happy with the weather!

The average last frost date for our area is around mid-October. In Clark County, out in the rural areas, we have had light frost in open areas but not a killing frost.

In fact, it always seems like we have an early frost in October that kills annuals and then we have extended warm weather after that. Not this year.

While out working in the garden this weekend, cutting back what I could (I cut back any perennials that just look bad right now), I noticed that the buds on my lilacs were starting to open.

This is not what normally occurs this time of the year. The leaf buds that should be next year's growth have already opened and the leaves are beginning to grow.

You may be noticing this on other plants in the landscape as well. It's because of the extended warm weather.

If we get really cold weather and the leaves are in a tender stage, they will likely be damaged. I suspect that we won't have enough continued warm weather for new buds to develop yet this fall.

I also suspect that if the leaves that are coming out now are damaged by cold, the plant will still send out new growth next spring. This is similar to what occurs when new growth comes out in the spring and gets damaged by a sudden freeze.

Plants have what are called adventitious buds. These are unseen buds that are at various points along the stem, usually in the leaf axils of the young stem.

When the first buds are killed by cold damage, the adventitious buds will open up in the spring. They are sort of a plant-survival mechanism as you will. Plants want to survive!

Therefore, if you see your landscape trees and shrubs starting to break bud just keep an eye on them and let's see what happens next spring. I know I will be watching this particular lilac.

I also have grape hyacinths (a spring blooming bulb) that have already started to grow the foliage. This will likely be damage through the winter but they still should bloom next spring.

One thing I have learned over the many years I have been in the horticulture industry - you can't control Mother Nature - nor can you predict her!



Annual flowers still look too good to pull out!



Next year's leaf buds on lilac starting to open due to warm weather